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All about the championship — P.3-4-5

TITLE RACE STARTS ON SATURDAY

— By PAUL DEAN —

The 16th NSW Federation championship kicks off on Saturday when a somewhat rebuilt APIA play host to the greatly improved Auburn at Lambert Park.

The following day will produce at least two potential thrillers.

Marconi, bitterly disappointed over their one lapse in the Ampol Cup, will bend over backwards to desecrate the Saints' newly won halo.

The great rivalry between the clubs is only enhanced by the "feeling" that exists between Marconi's present coach, Rale Rasic and his club of last year — Saints.

At Wentworth Park, Hakoah will meet one of their eternal nemesis, Yugal.

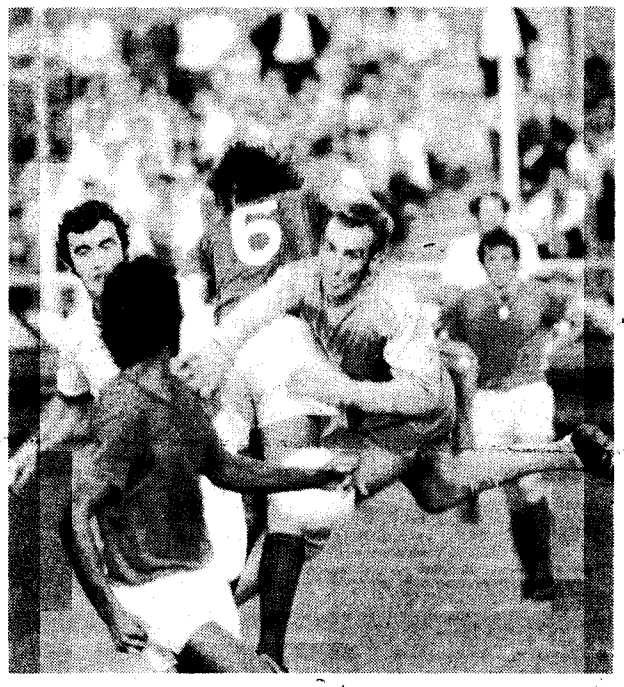
Although vastly superior on paper, Hakoah just cannot be too sure against this deceptive, moody, yet talented team.

Wests travel to Woonona for the points and, barring accidents, should return with them as the provincials are far from invincible at home these days.

And finally, Seymour Shaw Park will see the First Division debut of plucky little Sutherland, against the re-re-renamed Croatia.

If the Ampol crowds are any indication, the championship attendances this season could show a healthy upswing.

Perhaps the first round of matches will bear this out.



Arok gains first prize

The hoodoo has been broken — finally, St. George coach Frank Arok has something to show for his labors.

His charges, exhausted after two semifinal replays, had enough class and savoir-faire to clinch the Ampol Cup, beating Prague 2-0.

This also means the death of another tradition: the match ended Prague's long run of cup final successes.

Prague won the cup in 1959, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965 and 1969, and Saints previously in 1960 and 1967.

In all fairness to the weary Saints it must be stressed that the cup went to the best team in the series.

They played nine games without a loss, scored the greatest number of goals and provided the tournament's top scorer in Jimmy Herron.

The final didn't really show just how good the Saints are — they were never fully extended.

Prague did a great deal better than anybody had expected by reaching the final in the first place; winning, clearly, was beyond them.

The crowd of 6,233, although one of the smallest Ampol Cup final attendances ever, was still satisfactory in view of Prague's complete lack of support.

The almost complete lack of pre-match publicity on Sunday morning didn't help swell the crowd either.

Three of the four Sunday newspapers didn't even mention the final, and none of the Monday papers bothered to send any one along to the match.

● Full details page 7.

Three spots still vacant in NSW side

— By LOU GAUTIER —

At least three positions are still in doubt in the NSW team which will play against South Australia in Adelaide next Wednesday.

State coach Les Scheinflug is still undecided about his goalkeeper, second stopper and one midfielder.

Jim Cummings (South Coast), Dave McQuire (APIA) and late selection, Jan Tuinman (Prague), are fighting it out for the goalkeeping berth and their respective forms in the opening round of the championship this weekend could decide who gets the number one spot against South Australia.

John Watkiss and Doug Utjesenovic are in consideration as twin stopper to Peter Wilson, the captain of the State team, while Drew Dunlop (South Coast) and Marconi's Ernie Campbell are very much in the balance for the last midfield berth.

The NSW team, barring injuries this weekend, will be:

Cummings (McQuire or Tuinman) — Harris, Utjesenovic (Watkiss), Wilson, Hogg — Richards, Rooney, Dunlop (Campbell) — Abonyi, Tolson, Alston.

Their South Australian opponents were outclassed by Victoria in Melbourne last Sunday when only 800 spectators, despite perfect weather, at Olympic Park saw the Victorians win 2-0 with goals by Australian internationals Jim Mackay and Sandy Irvine.

The South Australian line-up was:

Romanowicz, B. Nyskohus, Kefadas, Yeels, Burdett, Kolecki, Pillans, Birch, Pantelis, E. Nyskohus, Norman.

This is the team which is also expected to take the field against NSW.

The NSW party of 14 players, plus coach Scheinflug, team-manager Karel Rodny and physiotherapist Peter van Rijn, will leave Sydney only at 3.30 p.m. on the day of the match.

The game will be played, under floodlights, at Hindmarsh Stadium.

The visitors will stay overnight in Adelaide and catch the 7 a.m. flight home the next day.

The team will fly Ansett Airlines of Australia.

On paper, NSW should win, and win well, but South Australia, at home, are a tough side to beat.

You can forget about their shocking display in losing to Victoria last Sunday.

Next week, in front of a capacity crowd, they will be a different proposition and NSW will surely have to play near their peak to win as convincingly as they should — and can.

TOP — A rare moment of danger in the St. George-Budapest goalmouth in last Sunday's Ampol Cup final when it took Harry Williams, Willie Hamilton (6) and goalie Jim Fraser to contain Prague's Peter Walsh while Atti Abonyi, with hands on hip, looks on in the background. ABOVE — Stand-in captain George Harris strikes an unorthodox pose after accepting the cup for St. George from Ampol Petroleum's Merv Payne.

VIC. AMPOL TO CROATIA

Croatia beat JUST 2-1 in the final of the Victorian Ampol Cup last Friday.

Havdiavic and McIntyre scored for the winners; Stankovic for JUST.

Croatia will now meet St. George-Budapest in the two-legged inter-city final, to be played in Sydney on Wednesday, March 29, and in Melbourne on April 5.

Croatia won the interstate series last year when they beat Western Suburbs (1-1 in Melbourne and 3-1 in Sydney).

The Australian Federation's World Cup and Tours sub-committee meets in Sydney on Saturday to discuss our WORLD CUP PLANS and the coming tours by Dundee and Wolverhampton, as well as to further examine the national team's proposed Asian tour in October. The meeting is expected to confirm Rale Rasic's appointment as national team coach until at least December 1973. Rasic will be asked to map out a plan of action for the World Cup which, we sincerely hope, will be adhered to this time. The all-important sub-committee whose decisions this weekend may well make or break Australia's World Cup chances comprises of Tibor Kalman (NSW), Tom Grimson (NSW), John Barclay (Victoria), Ian Brusasco (Queensland) and John Nikolic (South Australia).

CLUB PATROL

Coach Tommy Anderson is disappointed that the Auburn committee earlier this week broke off negotiations with JOHN BUTLER, Prague's former Victorian striker. There is some talk, however, that the clubs may yet make an exchange deal — Butler for Schneider.

* * *

IAN HILLSDON and Auburn's DENNIS HOGGART are possible Croatia additions this year. Hillsdon is on transfer from Hakoah for $2,000, but the fee could be reduced because of his sterling service to the club.

* * *

Canterbury have secured the services of one of Australia's leading physiotherapists this season. He is BERT HOWE, who is in line for one of the posts with Australia's Olympic swimming team.

* * *

The wife of St. George-Budapest coach FRANK AROK will be joining him soon. The Arok's only daughter, however, will only visit her parents for the European summer holidays, then return to Novisad to continue her Yugoslav schooling.

* * *

South Coast's highly promising new English striker, DAVE RIGBY, was joined in Wollongong by his wife last Friday.

* * *

PETER HUGHES will resume between the sticks for Sutherland this weekend. Hughes, coach Johnson's first choice as goalkeeper, badly injured a finger four weeks ago.

* * *

Sutherland scored in the dying seconds to beat Canterbury 2-1 in the final of the MINI-AMPOL CUP last Sunday. The match was a thriller from start to finish, and it was a shame there should have been a loser after such a high standard match.

South Coast defeated Balgownie 4-1 in a trial match at Woonona last week. JULIO SANTORO scored all four goals for the First Division team.

* * *

MIKE JOHNSON this week signed a five-year contract with Sutherland. Johnson, incidentally, scoffs at predictions that his newly-promoted team will be relegated instantly. He sees at least two clubs finishing behind Sutherland this season.

* * *

Auburn could only beat NORTHERN DISTRICTS 1-0 (a penalty) in a friendly match at Jenner Road Stadium last week.

* * *

JIM NEWTOWN, the Melita Eagles third grade manager, enters hospital this week for a series of tests.

* * *

BANKSTOWN last week beat Melita Eagles 2-0 and 3-0 in third and second grades respectively, but lost the first grade trial match 3-0.

* * *

LUCIANO NESTI has now officially taken over as coach of Juventus-Melbourne. Nesti, 45, coached Marconi last year after the brief stint by Mick Jones.

* * *

South Coast, noted for their excellent contacts in the United Kingdom, are expecting NEW PLAYERS from Britain in the next three to four weeks.

* * *

PAT WOODS, the former Queensland and NSW representative fullback, was the successful applicant for the assistant-coach's position with Western Suburbs.

* * *

The wife of Sutherland's CASEY DE BRUIN is expecting their first child in about four weeks.

* * *

HARRY XIPOLITAS would have missed the opening round of the championship had Pan Hellenic played this weekend as he only returns on Friday from a two-week holiday in New Zealand. What makes this item truly newsworthy is that Pan Hellenic allowed one of their key defenders to miss two weeks training after conceding eight goals to St. George-Budapest . . .

* * *

Corinthians crushed First Division Northern NSW club Wallsend 5-1 in a friendly match at Wallsend last week. MICK CAIRNS hit form from the start to score four of the goals. The reserves drew 1-1, but the thirds lost 5-0.

* * *

LES McGILL, the talented Manly half-back, has returned to England, but there is a good chance that former player-coach Brian McDonald will return soon.

* * *

Both MATT COLLINS and BOBBY JOHNSON have rejoined the Corinthians fold during the past week.

* * *

The first round PRAGUE v. PAN HELLENIC championship match, which should have been played this Sunday, will definitely take place next Wednesday, March 22, under floodlights, at Marks Field.

Tough Western Suburbs defender MATT GUILDEA is a crack insurance salesman. Guildea was featured recently in Press advertisements as having sold $1 million worth of insurance for his firm.

* * *

A depleted Hakoah beat APIA 2-0 in a trial match at Wentworth Park last Saturday. Muniz and Baartz scored the goals. Trying out with Hakoah was NICK VAN EGMOND, Wilhelmina-Melbourne's goalkeeper.

* * *

EAN CUTHBERT was recovering nicely from his knee operation when he was hurt in an accident at work last week. The English defender will be out for another fairly lengthy spell according to South Coast coach Les Scheinflug.

* * *

The wife of Marconi's ALFREDO MOSCHEN departed for a holiday to Italy last week. Moschen, who missed last week's play-off against Wests, is fit for Sunday's clash of giants at Marconi Oval.

* * *

PAN HELLENC beat Sutherland 4-2 in a trial match last weekend at Seymour Shaw Park. Harding, Clarke, Culledon and Doyle were their scorers. Pan Hellenic won the third grade 7-1 and the reserve match 1-0.

* * *

Granville's new masseur is RUSS PING, an ex-soccer player, with British experience.

Leading inter-suburban First Division side, Rosebery Rhodes, seeks TRIAL MATCHES this weekend and next. The club can provide a ground — their home pitch at Turrumul Park. Interested clubs should ring coach Bill Vrolyks at 661-4092 (after hours).

* * *

After ten years service BILL KADISON has asked Hakoah to be relieved of public address speaking. Bill, however, will not relenquish his PA duties at important NSW Federation promotions.

* * *

DON HODGSON, one of the big names in Victorian and Australian soccer in the late 1950's and early 1960's, has joined Manly. Hodgson was the star of the very successful George Cross team of that era.

Former APIA stopper JIM SAMBROOK was the star performer for Azzurri-Bayswater (Perth) when they won two matches in Brisbane last weekend. Azzurri beat Ipswich 3-0 and a combined Brisbane XI 2-1. The West Australians played midweek in Adelaide on their way home.

COSTLY LESSON FOR MANFRED

Manfred Schaefer, the St. George skipper, will be about $250 poorer because of his brush with coach Frank Arok.

Last Friday Schaefer arrived late for the semifinal replay against Wests, believing the starting time was 8.30 p.m., not 8 p.m.

Arok dropped him and asked him to sit next to him on the bench until halftime.

When Schaefer realised he wouldn't be sent in as a replacement, he changed and left the ground in a huff.

Next morning, though, he apologised — and this was accepted. However, Arok insisted on punishing him by leaving him out of the team on Sunday. He will not share the Ampol final bonus.

Said Schaefer this week: "I know I was wrong about going home, so I deserved to be omitted. My first reaction was that I'd ask for a transfer.

MANFRED SCHAEFER

"But how could I, after 10 years here in the club? This will cost me a packet."

Said Arok: "Schaefer, the captain of the team, should show an example instead of behaving like a petulant child.

"I have to be harsher with him than with anybody else. He knows this."

Will Schaefer return to the team against Marconi on Sunday?

"I can't even guarantee that," said Arok. "Hamilton played very well in his place. Schaefer will have some extra training during the week, then we'll see."

10,200 more spectators

Ampol Cup attendances were up 10,200 spectators on last season.

The 1972 series attracted 75,200 spectators — the second highest total since the new-look Ampol Cup was introduced in 1966.

Only the 1969 pre-season competition — when Pan Hellenic reached the final — drew more people (84,900).

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF

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— For Members only.

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Tuesday, March 21: Shire Darts.
Wednesday, March 22: Harvey Shield Bowls.

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Title contenders will clash at Bossley Park

— By LOU GAUTIER —

There's only five matches in this opening championship round for 1972 as the Prague v. Pan Hellenic game has been deferred because the Marks Field is not available.

The match may be played at Marks Field next Wednesday evening.

There is only one Saturday game — at Lambert Park — while two of Sunday's matches are miles out of Sydney, at Woonona and Bossley Park, and another — Sutherland v. Croatia — 15 miles south of the GPO.

The only city fixture is the Hakoah-Yugal pairing at Wentworth Park, but the round's most attractive game is the Marconi v. St. George clash at Marconi Oval which pits national coach Rale Rasic's new club against the side he led to Grand Final victory in 1971.

Our first championship reviews for 1972:

APIA v. Auburn

Scotsman John McGhee will make his official debut for APIA on Saturday.

McGhee and midfield playmaker Malcolm Clarke, the ex-Cardiff City and Hartlepools man, should strengthen APIA, and give them a slight edge over Auburn.

APIA's attack should see plenty of the ball and Lambert Park patrons are likely to be conveyed to forward action galore.

DANNY McKINNON (APIA)

Auburn won't be travelling to Leichhardt just for the outing, and have trump cards of their own to make it hot for the hosts.

Frank Brady's return at stopper will steady their rearguard and allow Les Hucker to adopt an attacking stanza more to his liking.

Our tip: APIA.

Yugal v. Hakoah

Hakoah fans will be hoping that the championship transforms their ailing team into something resembling the giant of last season.

Hakoah's line-up is still so formidable that it's hard to see them botch up their premiership debut by even dropping a point.

Yugal have always managed to stretch Hakoah in the past, and Sunday's match should be no exception.

Even if Hakoah should come out on top in the end they will know they have been playing because no team can take Yugal's moody ballplayers cheaply.

DAVE KEDDIE (Hakoah)

They just have to click to lick the pants of the best of them.

Yugal's big weakness will be in goal where they need an adequate replacement for Cajkusic. One hates to think what Baartz, Keddie and Co. will do to an inexperienced goalie if they are in a shooting mood . . .

Our tip: Hakoah.

ROUND 1

Marconi v. St. George

There should be a near-record crowd, in the vicinity of 6,000 spectators, at Bossley Park on Sunday although the match is not the Ampol Cup final "revenge" many people expected.

It is imperative for both these title-chasing sides to start the championship with a win — a tall order for either team.

This is a match which promises a lot, so let's hope the players can overcome their nerves and turn on the champagne stuff they are capable of.

On paper, this looks like a tussle between Saints' attack and Marconi's defence, but Marconi's forwards may come good at last, especially Max Tolson, who's had a most disappointing debut with his new club.

I have a sneaking suspicion goals will be scored here despite the high standard of the defenders on display, many of whom are Australian or NSW representatives.

Our tip: Draw.

Sutherland v. Croatia

With most people earmarking the two teams as relegation candidates, this will already be a very important game.

There's precious little to choose from this pair at this stage.

The side which enjoys the lucky breaks on Sunday should win by the barest of margins.

Croatia will rely on the experience of Susa and Corry in defence and on the dash of Taylor and Sullivan, neither of whom have shone so far this year, in attack.

This match has all the makings of a no holds barred draw although Croatia would dearly love to celebrate the return of their name with a win.

Our tip: Draw.

South Coast v. Western Suburbs

No longer all that perilous a journey, the trip to Woonona, however, won't be a sinecure for Wests.

The provincials are always more at ease and confident against a team that plays Wests' type of football, based on speed, direct methods and aggressive tactics.

This is the style of soccer Coast also favor, but they haven't quite reached their opponents' fluency — and are not likely to do so until they've strengthened a few positions in their team.

The stage is set for an uncompromising, full-blooded battle royal between two teams who like to play at full pelt.

Fans are certain to be the big winners, as they will get 90 minutes of action-packed football.

Our tip: Wests.

VITAL STATISTICS

APIA v. Auburn 10-2-8

APIA have not beaten Auburn at home since 1963.

Their last three clashes at Lambert Park have produced one draw and two Auburn wins.

So far since 1957, APIA have conceded 499 goals in the championship — will Auburn "help" them to reach the semi-millenium?

Marconi v. St. George 1-0-3

Two home matches so far at Marconi Oval — both won 2-0 by the visiting Saints.

In their four championship encounters so far, St. George have failed to score only once — in 1970, at Hurstville.

Hakoah v. Yugal 7-6-7

It's been hot and cold for Hakoah lately against Yugal; in 1970 they lost both matches, in 1971 they won both.

As a home team, Hakoah have lost only once since 1963 — in 1970.

South Coast v. Wests 0-1-1

Only two matches on record — and the provincials have yet to win a game.

If they did it now, it would be their 100th championship win ever.

Sutherland v. Croatia

Meeting for the first time.

OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF NSW FEDERATION

THIS WEEK

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

CHAMPIONSHIP

APIA v. Auburn — Lambert Park
Northern Districts v. NS-Inter — Englefield Stadium

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

Marconi v. St. George — Marconi Oval
Hakoah v. Yugal — Wentworth Park
South Coast v. Western Suburbs — Woonona Oval
Sutherland v. South Sydney — Seymour Shaw Park
Canterbury v. Corinthians — Arlington Oval
Granville v. Balgownie — Garside Park
Bankstown v. Guildford — Soccer Centre

NEXT WEEK

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

Pan Hellenic v. South Coast — Wentworth Park
Polonia v. Northern Districts — Soccer Centre

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

Yugal v. Marconi — Marks Field
St. George v. APIA — Hurstville Oval
Western Suburbs v. Hakoah — Drummoyne Oval
Croatia v. Prague — Wentworth Park
Auburn v. Sutherland — Mona Park
Corinthians v. Melita Eagles — Jones Park
Ku-ring-gai v. Bankstown — Acron Oval
Balgownie v. Canterbury — Balgownie Oval
NS-Inter v. Granville — North Sydney Oval
Guildford v. Manly — Guildford Park

TIPSTERS' CORNER

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES	Paul Dean	Lou Gautier	Keith Gilmour	Charles Spiteri	Frank Jordan	Most favored
APIA v. Auburn	1	1	1	2	1	1
Marconi v. St. George	2	x	2	1	2	2
Hakoah v. Yugal	1	1	1	1	1	1
SCU v. Wests	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sutherland v. Croatia	2	x	1	1	2	
Canterbury v. Corinthians	1	1	1	1	1	1
Northern Dists. v. NS-Inter	2	2	x	2	2	2
Granville v. Balgownie	1	1	1	2	1	1
Bankstown v. Guildford	1	1	1	1	1	1

REFEREES FOR THIS WEEKEND

First Division: APIA v. Auburn — B. Wilkinson; Marconi v. St. George-Budapest — W. Novelli; Hakoah v. Yugal — A. Boskovic; South Coast v. Western Suburbs — K. Lockrey; Sutherland v. Croatia — P. Rampley.

Second Division: Northern Districts v. NS-Inter — A. Day; Canterbury v. Corinthians — N. Campbell; Granville v. Balgownie — F. O'Connor; Bankstown v. Guildford — W. Bruce.

APIA
McQUIRE
KEITH
ACKERLEY
RUSSELL
McGHEE
M. CLARKE
BLUES
ROONEY
BURNETT
McKINNON
BUTLER

AUBURN
TAYLOR
MENZIES
SELFRIDGE
HUCKER
BRADY
TRAIL
K. EDWARDS
MALONE
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ROGERS
SCHNEIDER

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SKUNCA
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WATERS
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M. ALAGICH

HAKOAH
FORRESTER
DAVEY
HUGHES
WATKISS
MARNOCH
FEKETE
MUNIZ
YARDLEY
KEDDIE
BAARTZ
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CHAMPIONSHIP 1972

BATTLE OF GIANTS MAY FLARE UP ONCE AGAIN

— By LOU GAUTIER —

I am convinced — as convinced as anybody can be about Sydney soccer — that the 1972 championship will again be a two-way battle.

The two teams that I see fighting it out for the first place are old rivals Hakoah and St. George-Budapest.

Let me give my reasons.

HAKOAH, basically unchanged since last year, will perform well despite their Ampol Cup woes.

With Baartz, Keddie, Yardley and Muniz also to choose from, Hakoah's attack will sparkle again while their defence looks as solid as ever with the old guard sure to give nothing away when the chips are down.

Hakoah have never been great ones for sparkling Ampol Cup displays, but the championship transforms them into a formidable machine which will again take some beating.

Hakoah may not go through the league unbeaten, but it will take a good team to take the first place away from them.

SPIRITED BID

Saints may just be the team to do just that as they can justifiably aim for the very top again this season.

ST. GEORGE are making another spirited bid for success where they have failed since 1962: to finish on top of the table.

The club has the same team as last year, with the exception of Melbourne-stuck goalkeeper Jack Reilly.

This should be worth several points to them as the team won't lose any time in settling down and may produce its best straight from the kick-off.

Saints have the opportunity to prove their mettle as early as the first championship round when they are drawn to travel to Marconi Oval to meet one of their most dangerous challengers for the title.

Provided St. George can rid themselves of the assorted complexes which invariably bring on their downfall when a big effort is required, their chances of league victory look the brightest in a decade despite their lack of reserves.

I have a feeling that Marconi, Western Suburbs and APIA will fight it out for the third and fourth places, somewhat behind the first three, but well ahead of the others.

WESTERN SUBURBS, with an excellently constructed club, committee and prosperous social club behind the team, deserve respect despite indifferent early season form.

Constant team changing, however, has been a feature of the team so far this season, in sharp contrast to 1971 when understanding and cohesion were achieved because Tommy Dawson relied on a small pool of players.

Wests have started to show some signs of corrosion; a few of their former players slowed down, others lost their zing, while others can't get into the first team as regulars.

The team has enough talent, though, to make its presence in the league felt, and on their day they can beat any team in Sydney.

They may keep in touch with the leaders, although I can't see them joining in the race for first place.

MARCONI are bursting with vitality, talent and ambition.

Their effort in team-building has already shown results, and there is no reason why more improvements shouldn't be forthcoming.

Playing at Bossley Park will prove a big advantage to them because they look like having the largest — and most vocal — support at home, if Ampol Cup crowds were any indication.

Marconi, in the capable hands of Rale Rasic, may become a giant of Sydney soccer in their third year of First Division.

With their well organised defence, their effective, forceful midfielders and bullocking forwards, Marconi could even split Hakoah and St. George with a bit of luck.

SURPRISE

My high regard for APIA may surprise, but they could even surprise further by forging higher than the slot I envisage for them.

The APIA team which started the Ampol Cup so disastrously by losing 0-3 to Prague will bear little resemblance to what their strongest XI will be once all the club's new imports take the field.

Already now, with Rooney, Malcolm Clarke and McGhee, APIA must be taken seriously because this experienced midfield trio is just what the doctor ordered for their young forwards.

With Blues' return to the wing and the great form displayed this season by Danny McKinnon, APIA's young lions — Butler, Russell, Pollard, Burnett, Deller — will be able to mature along at a far more leisurely pace instead of carrying the forward line on their young shoulders, as was the case with Butler in the second half of last year's championship.

Once APIA's two new South Americans find their bearings, they may justify Ricardo Campana's claim that both are better players than him — and then APIA will take some beating and happy days will be here again for the long-starved Lambert Park fans, now sulking in Marconi's shadow.

Pan Hellenic, Yugal, South Coast and Auburn, I believe, **won't be very far from one another at the finish.**

YUGAL still have some fine players, although their numbers are diminishing fast (Rudic, Trkulja, Takac, Alagich, Brajkovic) who could pull them through well.

In fact, if I had to pick an outsider, a "bolter", I would choose Yugal to finish in the "four", like in 1970 and 1971.

On any given day, if the mood strikes their erratic, temperamental players, they can lick any local opponents, but those days are getting rarer.

Lack of fitness and too many "chiefs" and not enough "Indians" among their highly individualistic Yugoslav players, could again be their Achilles' heel.

New boys from Yugoslavia, Serdarevic Mihaljovic and Markovic, haven't set the world on fire yet, and there's the added worry for them of finding a competent goalie.

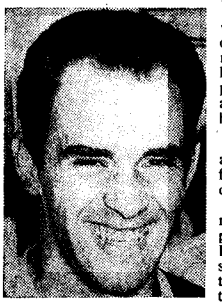
PAN HELLENIC don't impress me as a team capable of going through the 22 weeks of the championship without their traditional ups and downs.

They aren't, of course, as bad as the 8-0 against St. George suggests, but by the same token I don't think they can seriously think of finishing any higher than seventh, at best.

Although Joe Vlasits has been working hard at it, I am still convinced they should modify their style by including in their midfield a shrewd ball-playing tactician.

It can't be a coincidence that Hellenic played their best football — in 1962 and 1968 — when they relied on that type of player (Marvro, Loukanidis) to distribute the ball to the hard-running, but unimaginative forwards around them.

SOUTH COAST showed enough in several cup outings to suggest that with a couple of reinforcements in attack, they can steer well clear of the relegation zone.



JULIO SANTORO
(South Coast)

Woonona Oval will again be worth a few points to the provincials, who still have to replace former stars Tolson and Wilson.

Les Scheinflug is trying bravely to make do with the material available, of which Dunlop, extremely talented and promising 16-year-old Thompson, goalie Cummings, and new striker Rigby stand out.

I don't expect any great fireworks from United unless they really splurge or are very lucky with new British imports, but by the same token they can win their share of matches, even against more fancied opponents, at Woonona.

AUBURN had an inconsistent Ampol Cup career, alternating the very good (vs Hakoah, Marconi) with the positively mediocre (Wests, Sutherland), which suggests they, too, may have big ups and downs in 1972.

One thing is certain, however: the days when Auburn were whipping boys for grateful opponents are well and truly over.

Tommy Anderson now has so many players at his disposal that he can mould something more than useful out of that.

New State cap, Bill Rogers, could be one of the stars of '72, and just the man Auburn needs to convert some of the chances Brady, Hucker and Malone are sure to create.

Sutherland, Prague and Croatia look, at the moment, the weakest in the field, but there again the picture could change in a matter of weeks.

CROATIA will be in big trouble unless they get a transfusion of new blood.

They need young players in defence and a few old hands in attack and in the midfield now that John Doyle is gone.

Corry can't be expected to keep on performing heroics between the sticks behind a leaky defence.

Kobescak, Taylor and Sullivan form the nucleus of an above average forward line which has some possibilities, but it's at the back Souths will suffer in 1972.

PRAGUE, despite their spot in the Ampol Cup final this year may be in dire peril again and can't be all that confident.

Leo Baumgartner certainly has a hard task on his hands getting the club he helped make famous into a higher spot on the table than last season.

This may be the season when Leo gets his big chance to show his true mettle as a coach as he will have earned unanimous praise if Prague even gain a couple of places in this highly competitive field.

SUTHERLAND have won a lot of friends and goodwill for their Ampol displays to date.

They have also surprised many people who didn't expect so much of them, but I would still be pleasantly surprised if they could keep this form up throughout the tough grind of 22 championship rounds.

In 90 minute matches, week in week out, the strain may tell, and the inexperience of many of their players may catch up with Sutherland.

There will be a lot of interest in Kim Yung Wan, their Korean "exchange student", but it may take more for Mike Johnson's brave experiment to succeed.

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SOME OF THESE MAY COME TRUE

I cannot resist putting my head on the chopping block next to Lou Gautier's with a few careless, possibly heretical remarks.

I, too, see the 1972 championship as a two-horse race — but feel that Hakoah's fling at the top may end.

Their stalwarts like Watkiss, Yardley and Marnoch are a year older and perhaps a few inches slower; they may also have goalkeeping problems for a change.

St. George look a better balanced team. Their tremendous handicap, of course, is their lack of depth.

If they can find or groom at least three or four standby players capable of challenging for first team slots, they may at long last get ahead of Hakoah in the queue.

Several others will run a separate race for third place and I fancy Wests, a solid, well-run outfit.

APIA should have a much better season than last year while Marconi, in my book anyway, are rather over-rated.

Cruel as it may sound, I forecast Sutherland to sink into Second Division, with all their worthy ambitions and ideals.

Auburn won't be far away and Croatia, with Prague, could also experience a few sticky weeks towards the end.

—oOo—

I also expect at least four or five of the First Division clubs to change coaches during the season.

It would be terribly unkind to name them — so let it suffice that they will come from the bottom half of the table.

—oOo—

The Wolverhampton tour will be a moderate success while Dundee's appeal will not exceed that of Cardiff City.

The end-of-season intercity series will create only limited interest and, financially at least, will be a flop in Sydney.

—oOo—

Australia will tour Asia at the end of the year and play about 10 matches, winning the majority if not all.

Rasic will be the coach and Tibor Kalman the manager.

—oOo—

The NSW Executive will have a peaceful season without resignations and dramas; the differences between Karl Rodny and Hakoah will at first get worse, then fade away into happy oblivion.

The ASF and its numerous committees will perform as usual.

Australia will win the day at the Bangkok meeting in splitting the World Cup groups but will not apply for immediate admission to the Asian Confederation.

Towards the end of the year, Arthur George will emulate his huge grant for university students with a similar scheme for soccer.

— PAUL DEAN

HAKOAH SLIGHT TITLE FAVORITES

Traditionally and equally foolishly, we make our rash forecasts as to the final order of finishing in the 1972 championship.

PAUL DEAN	CHARLES SPITERI
1 ST. GEORGE	1 MARCONI
2 HAKOAH	2 HAKOAH
3 WESTS	3 ST. GEORGE
4 APIA	4 APIA
5 MARCONI	5 WESTS
6 YUGAL	6 AUBURN
7 PAN HELLENIC	7 PRAGUE
8 SOUTH COAST	8 YUGAL
9 PRAGUE	9 SOUTH COAST
10 CROATIA	10 PAN HELLENIC
11 AUBURN	11 SUTHERLAND
12 SUTHERLAND	12 CROATIA
LOU GAUTIER	**PETER SCHUMACHER**
1 HAKOAH	1 ST. GEORGE
2 ST. GEORGE	2 MARCONI
3 MARCONI	3 HAKOAH
4 WESTS	4 AUBURN
5 APIA	5 WESTS
6 YUGAL	6 PAN HELLENIC
7 PAN HELLENIC	7 APIA
8 SOUTH COAST	8 YUGAL
9 AUBURN	9 CROATIA
10 CROATIA	10 PRAGUE
11 PRAGUE	11 SOUTH COAST
12 SUTHERLAND	12 SUTHERLAND
KEITH GILMOUR	**FRANK JORDAN**
1 HAKOAH	1 HAKOAH
2 ST. GEORGE	2 ST. GEORGE
3 WESTS	3 MARCONI
4 MARCONI	4 WESTS
5 APIA	5 APIA
6 PAN HELLENIC	6 SOUTH COAST
7 SOUTH COAST	7 PRAGUE
8 PRAGUE	8 YUGAL
9 YUGAL	9 PAN HELLENIC
10 AUBURN	10 CROATIA
11 SUTHERLAND	11 AUBURN
12 CROATIA	12 SUTHERLAND

CHAMPIONSHIP 1972

YEAR VITAL FOR YOUNG PROSPECTS

— By PAUL DEAN —

The 1972 season will be a vital one for players seeking a spot in the national team.

In October Australia will play a string of matches in Asia and it's likely that the team for next year's World Cup battles will be formulated there.

Quite a number of promising youngsters have a good chance of laying strong claims to selection and stardom.

APIA's winger Terry Butler this year must prove that he is more than just an exciting prospect — and I rather feel he will do just that.

Croatia's Maurice Sullivan, a thoughtful, clever striker, could also force his way into Rasic's squad though he may be handicapped by the overall weaknesses of his team.

George Harris, the St. George fullback is now much more than a mere talent — this season he should clinch a position in the Australian team for many years to come.

Prague's Bill Reilly, in his new midfield role, may also turn out to be more than a useful star in the making.

Western Suburbs have goalkeeper Ross Kelly, fullback John Hargreaves, midfielder Greg Smith and striker Brian Turner on display among the youthful talent.

Although the least regular of them in his own team, I fancy Smith's chances of coming of age the quickest.

HOPEFULS

Marconi's fullback Stuart Robertson is also among the young hopefuls though, at this stage, seems a fair distance behind Harris in the selection race.

The season will be decisive also for the more mature and established players.

APIA's Rooney and Blues will strive to make the Australian team; the dearth of wingers makes Blues' prospects bright — if only he decides to be a bit more fortright and daring.

South Coast's Drew Dunlop, a fine ballplayer, has the ability to reach international standard and so have three of St. George's relative newcomers, Jim Herron, Bobby Hogg and Willie Hamilton.

Herron, in fact, could be the surprise packet of the season and solve Rasic's search for a top striker.

Attila Abonyi, Alan Ainslie, Mike Denton and Adrian Alston, all former internationals, cannot all be certain of their places in the national side though one or two will undoubtedly make it.

Marconi's Peter Wilson will again be the main candidate for the stopper's post — unless Allan Marnoch decides to make a come-back.

Alan Griffith, also from Marconi, could well be a new "cap" in 1972 as could be Hakoah's Bobby Fekete.

Ray Richards has to produce only his usual form to stay in strong calculations.

John Watkiss, Hakoah's all-time great, will fight to re-establish himself in the Australian team — and should do it with ease.

In addition, there could be some others bobbing up unexpectedly.

These include APIA's John Russell, Pan Hellenic's John Doyle on the comeback trail, and two more youngsters from Wests, David Jack and Greg Byles.

There is no lack of talent in the Sydney First Division clubs; the question is how that talent will be used and displayed in the 1972 season.

The memory lingers on...

Prague, it's always Prague, when Sydney soccer history is revived.

It's this once great team, Sydney's "Wundermannschaft" that leads the championship parade.

Since the start of the Federation, Prague have won the greatest number of championships (premierships), namely four.

It was also Prague who pulled off the only championship hat-trick, by winning the title in 1959, 1960 and 1961.

Hakoah, APIA and South Coast all won three titles while Canterbury and St. George won one apiece.

All these clubs except Canterbury are still in First Division.

St. George have the dubious distinction of a record six second placings in the championship.

As they won it only once, one must assume that that little bit of extra has been missing from their repertoire that clinches titles.

APIA were runners-up three times, Canterbury and Hakoah twice, Corrimal and Auburn once.

Of the other teams involved in the 1972 title race, these were their best placings so far:

Wests 3rd (1971), Yugal 3rd (1970), Marconi 5th (1970), Croatia 3rd (1967), Auburn 2nd (1957), Pan Hellenic 2nd (1968). Sutherland, of course, are newcomers.

Just how important is a good start in a championship?

Six times out of the last 10 seasons, the team that was leading after the first five rounds also finished on top at the end.

These were Prague (1963), APIA (1967), Hakoah (1968), Hakoah (1970) and again Hakoah (1971).

The exceptions were Budapest in 1962, lying 3rd, APIA (1964) 5th, South Coast (1965) 2nd, and South Coast again in 1969, 7th.

Only three teams in this period led the title race with the maximum 10 points after five rounds: Prague in 1963, APIA in 1967 and Hakoah in 1970.

The least promising position of an eventual champion after the first five rounds was APIA's in 1964 (6 pts) and South Coast's in 1969 (also 6 pts.).

— Paul Dean

HELP LEGACY all the year round

All championship crowds

	Total Spectators	Weekly Average	Teams	Rounds
1957	176,000	8,800	11	20
1958	219,000	9,954	12	22
1959	301,000	11,580	14	26
1960	350,000	13,445	14	26
1961	389,500	17,700	12	22
1962	410,000	18,640	12	22
1963	455,000	20,681	12	22
1964	435,000	19,300	12	22
1965	268,000	14,905	10	18
1966	245,000	13,445	10	18
1967	298,000	13,545	12	22
1968	403,649	18,347	12	22
1969	366,491	16,654	12	22
1970	340,500	15,475	12	22
1971	335,600	15,256	12	22

GUIDE TO TOP 12

Here is a quick guide to the 12 First Division clubs.

Team	Coach	Country of birth	Colors	Home ground
Hakoah	B. Collins	Scotland	Blue-white	Wentworth Park
St. George	F. Arok	Yugoslavia	Red-white	Hurstville Oval
Wests	T. Dawson	England	Black-white	Drummoyne Oval
Yugal	S. Dacevski	Yugoslavia	Blue-white	Marks Field
South Coast	L. Scheinflug	Yugoslavia	Red-black	Woonona Oval
Marconi	Z. Rasic	Yugoslavia	Blue-white	Marconi Oval
Croatia	M. Kiss	Yugoslavia	Red-white	Lambert Park
APIA	J. Marston	Australia	Maron-blue	Lambert Park
Auburn	T. Anderson	Scotland	Yellow-white	Mona Park
Pan Hellenic	J. Vlasits	Hungary	Blue-white	Wentworth Park
Prague	L. Baumgartner	Austria	All white	Marks Field
Sutherland	M. Johnson	England	Blue-white	Seymour Shaw Pk.

Of these coaches the following have played in Sydney First Division:

Dacevski (Yugal), Scheinflug (Prague, Marconi, Canterbury), Rasic (Yugal), Marston (APIA), Anderson (South Coast, Pan Hellenic, St. George), Baumgartner (Prague, Canterbury, South Coast, APIA, Hakoah), Johnson (South Coast, Croatia).

Collins, of course, played for years with Everton and Leeds, also captaining Scotland; Dawson played with Charlton Athletic, then Wallsend in Newcastle and Vlasits with Hungary's long defunct NSC.

Dacevski, Marston, Baumgartner and Johnson actually coach teams they had once played for.

NEXT WEEK

Player of the Week competition details announced

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Stars in court

Several Polish stars including three internationals of Legia Warsaw will stand trial on charges of smuggling. According to the police, several Polish sportsmen have been smuggling goods into Poland regularly since 1965. Judging by similar precedents in other communist countries, all the accused are likely to be found guilty.

"China welcome" — Rous

"China is most welcome to rejoin the world family of soccer. We have no objection to China's admission to FIFA, provided it's not at the expense of Taiwan (Nationalist China)." This was FIFA president, Sir Stanley Rous, speaking on the BBC last week.

Brazilian National League favorites

Experts expect Botafogo, Flamengo, America (all from Rio), Palmeiras, Corintians, Sao Paulo FC (from Sao Paulo), Cruzeiro and Atletico (the 1971 champions) to fight it out for Brazil's second National League championship, which kicks off later this month. Santos are not even tipped to finish among the first eight and qualify for the money-making final rounds.

Stanley Matthews in Africa

Sir Stanley Matthews has accepted an offer to become official coach of the South African Bantu Football Association for two months and coach native players throughout South Africa. Matthews' trip is sponsored by the brewery which also finances the NPSL, the 10-team national league for Bantus only. Matthews is an ideal choice to stimulate African soccer as his name is literally magic to many Africans.

Panel selects Yugoslav referees

The method of appointing referees has again been changed in Yugoslavia. The system of putting names of referees into a hat has been abandoned and replaced by a five-man panel which picks the referees for the nine First Division matches every Wednesday, but doesn't release names until an hour before the kick-off. The first meeting of the new panel ended in tragedy when referees' president, Milan Botic, keeled over and died of a heart attack.

Europe's youngest national coach

Thirty-eight year-old Jose Augusto has become Europe's youngest national team manager. Augusto, the former Benfica right winger, is the successor of Pedroto, who has left Lisbon to manage the Brazilian Olaria, Garrincha's new Rio club. Augusto will not relinquish his position of assistant-coach of Benfica.

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Ace goalgrabber Gerd Muller is almost certain to leave Bayern Munchen when his contract expires in June. Muller's fondest wish is to play in Italy; an impossible dream, however, until Italy's ban on imports is eased. It is rumored in West Germany that Muller will be transferred to Borussia Moenchengladbach if his Bavarian club doesn't agree to his demands for at least a 25% raise.

● **Now, here is a surprising result: Macao, the tiny Portuguese outpost next to Hong Kong, has beaten the Danish Odense 5-1. Last year St. George defeated Macao 6-1.**

● A plaque-laying ceremony on March 2 commemorated the 100th anniversary of the first international match played on French soil — a club fixture at Becon-les-Bruyeres, on the outskirts of Paris, between England's White Rovers and the Parisian Standard Athletic Club.

● **Peru's national team, now managed by the Hungarian Lajos Baroti, will play twice in Teheran, against Iran, on April 28 and 30, during the South Americans' world tour which will take in ten matches in eight countries.**

● Holland, too, has pulled out of Brazil's "Little World Cup." Dutch FA secretary, Henk Burgwal, said his players needed the off-season break to recuperate and couldn't keep on playing practically the whole year round. Scotland, however, have accepted although such stars as David Hay, Kenny Dalgish, Archie Gemmill and John O'Hare won't be available, much to Tommy Docherty's chagrin.

● **Pierino Prati, the brilliant international striker of AC Milan, made his comeback, after a two-month lay-off through a knee injury, in the return Fairs' Cup quarterfinal against Lierse SK in Belgium.**

● Algeria beat Guinea 1-0 in a World Cup qualifying match in Algiers. The return match will be at Konakry next month.

● The vital Olympic qualifying tie between North Korea and Iran will be played on May 3 in Pyong-Yang, and on May 26 in Teheran. The winner will join Malaysia and the winner of next week's Rangoon pre-Olympic round-robin in Munich next August as Asia's representatives.

● **Thirty-two year-old Adolfo Gori, Juventus' former Italian international (one cap), has signed a two-year contract as player-coach of the Rochester Lancers, in the United States.**

● Pinheiro, Brazil's centre-half in the 1954 World Cup, has been appointed assistant-coach to Zeze Moreira at Fluminense, the Rio club.

● **The quarterfinalists in the Hungarian Cup are Ferencvaros, Ujpest, MTK, Tatabanya, Videoton, Raba ETO, and Second Division Szeged and Pecs. The quarterfinals were played this week.**

● In Northern Ireland, the country's top clubs, Linfield and Glentoran, were eliminated in the quarterfinals of the Cup.

● **North Korea is one of the 11 countries invited by the Iranians to take part in their Friendship Tournament in June. This is an annual event in which four Communist, four Western, and four "Third World" countries participate.**

● The Asian Champions' Cup tournament starts in Bangkok on April 4. At the conclusion of the 10-team series the Asian Soccer Confederation will hold the vital talks about World Cup venues in which the ASF president and secretary will participate.

● Benfica are headed for a clean sweep of all Portuguese titles this season. They are not only certain to win the First Division, but also the reserve grade, junior, under-16 and under-14 national championships as well.

● **Veteran left winger "Sigi" Held, who now plays for the regional Kickers Offenbach, has been recalled to the West German national squad. Held, one of the stars of the 1966 World Cup, is likely to get a run against Hungary, in Budapest later this month.**

● Juan Peiro, the former Atletico Madrid and AS Roma forward, will turn to coaching next season when he moves to Santander, a Second Division Spanish club.

● **Max Merkel, the Austrian martinet, seems certain to leave Atletico Madrid at the end of the season. His strict discipline didn't go down well with the players. Merkel may return to West Germany.**

● The Liverpool club has produced a record of choirs from their famous Kop. The songs were recorded "live" at last year's UEFA Cup match against Bayern Munchen, and at the league game against Chelsea.

● **Rudi Kaltenbrunner, Nice's Austrian international striker, returns home next season to join Admira Vienna, whose coach, Ernst Ocwirk, is a friend of the family.**

● Bayern Munchen superstar, Berti Vogts, has assured Helmut Schoen he would be fit to play both European Nations' Cup quarterfinal matches against England. Vogts is getting over a cartilage operation.

● **In the last round of the Scottish Cup (15 matches), four players were sent off and 27 were "booked".**

● At Ancona, in an under-21 international, Yugoslavia beat Italy 2-1.

● If AC Milan wins this season's UEFA Cup — and the Italian club is among the favorites — it will have taken out every available local and international trophy as the club has won both the Italian league and cup, and the European Champions' and Cup-Winners' Cups, as well as the Intercontinental Cup.

● **Two Polish internationals, Wladislas Grotnyski and Janusz Zmijewski, have been charged with smuggling foreign currency gold and diamonds into the country.**

● Vicente Jara, the Paraguayan international who played for Sabadell in Spain, has now lost the use of both eyes. Jara lost his left eye in a car accident in Spain 12 months ago.

● **The inauguration of Munich's Olympic Stadium has been brought back by two days. The ground will be officially opened on April 26 with a soccer international between West Germany and the Soviet Union.**

● Catanzaro, the Calabrian club, will undertake a summer tour of the USA and Canada and play matches in New York, Chicago, Toronto and Montreal against Santos and Manchester City.

Scot's appalling "record"

Dennis Ruddy, from Second Division Clydebank, copped the season's stiffest suspension in Scotland. Ruddy was outed for nine weeks and fined $250. Not surprising, really, when you consider that the 21-year-old has been sent off five times and warned 14 times in the past three seasons!

Congo wins African title

Congo-Brazzaville caused a sensation in winning the African Nations' Cup. Congo beat Mali 3-2 in the final, with host nation Cameroun defeating Zaire Republic (ex-Congo-Kinshasa) 5-2 for third place. M'Pele, the Congolese skipper who plays in the French First Division, received the trophy from FIFA president, Sir Stanley Rous, always the great traveller.

Brazilian boycott?

The Brazilians are furious at several European countries, for pulling out of their mini-World Cup. England, West Germany, Italy, Spain and Holland have already officially pulled out, as has Mexico. The Brazilians are said to be plotting revenge. Brazilian newspapers claim the boycott by some European countries is political. France, Yugoslavia and Scotland are the only European teams certain to compete. The Soviet Union will decide next month if it will take part.

Passes to be rewarded

The Italians have created a rich award destined to reward the players whose passes lay on goals. This may be the first step in a world-wide move to take some of the glory away from goalscorers. In ice-hockey, the player who sends the last pass in a goalscoring movement is duly acknowledged and his name is published, alongside the actual scorer's ("assist"). The French will follow the Italian lead and go one better by asking FIFA to instruct member associations to do likewise in their respective countries.

Portuguese of Paris

The largest crowd in Paris this year has been a paltry 17,000 for the First Division championship match between Red Star and Marseille, but on Easter Sunday the old Colombes Stadium will be packed by a near-capacity crowd of 50,000, most of whom will be Portuguese immigrants watching Benfica play a friendly match against Bayern Munchen, the Beckenbauer and Muller team. Benfica or Sporting Lisbon play regularly in the French capital, and invariably draw between 40,000 and 50,000 people. Paris, you see, is home to 350,000 Portuguese workers and their families.

SCOREBOARD

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS' CUP (quarterfinals, first leg): Ajax v. Arsenal 2-1; Ujpest v. Glasgow Celtic 1-2; Feyenoord v. Benfica 1-0; Inter v. Standard Liege 1-0.

EUROPEAN CUP-WINNERS' CUP (quarterfinals, first leg): Steaua Bucharest v. Bayern Munchen 1-1; Red Star Belgrade v. Dynamo Moscow 1-2; Torino v. Glasgow Rangers 1-1; Atvidaberg (Sweden) v. Dynamo East Berlin 0-2.

UEFA CUP (quarterfinals, first leg): Juventus Turin v. Wolverhampton 1-1; Ferencvaros v. Zeljeznicar 1-2; UT Arad v. Tottenham 0-2; Milan AC v. Lierse 1-1 (second leg — Milan AC qualifies for semifinals on 3-1 aggregate).

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ST. GEORGE v. PRAGUE 2-0

AINSLIE'S FIREWORKS HIGHLIGHTED DRAB AMPOL CUP FINAL

— By PAUL DEAN —

St. George can thank their lucky star that their opponents in the Ampol Cup final were the drab, colorless Prague.

The Saints were so weary and exhausted after their three-match cavalcade in six days that any reasonably strong and fresh team would have licked them.

It doesn't say much for Prague that they could not make a match of this final against their tired opponents.

In fact, they were badly outclassed for almost the entire 90 minutes; at no stage of the game did they even look like scoring.

St. George were also disappointing. They lacked elan and combinative skill; their strikers were without their fearsome punch.

Even so, they should have won by a much wider margin.

In the ninth minute Denton broke through and, from about six metres, smashed the ball against the bar.

Five minutes later Abonyi scored an offside goal, after Hamilton's solo on the byline and two minutes later Denton miskicked almost on the goal-line.

It looked as if the Saints just couldn't score at all — despite their huge territorial advantage.

Prague first threatened in the 20th minute when Reilly's drive sailed over the bar.

Twelve minutes later it was again Denton who missed the easiest of chances: quite alone near the goal, he smashed the ball into Tuinman.

The big guns of Ainslie's left foot came into play a minute later, but Tuinman brilliantly tipped the ball over the bar.

Prague's only real chance came in the 40th minute: Armytage beat Utjesenovic but his cross was sent wide by Anasis.

In the second half the St. George barrage continued. In the 47th minute Herron miskicked two metres from the goal in what was another "certain" scoring position.

In the 53rd minute the ice was broken. Alston brought up the ball and the Prague defence decided to spring an offside trap.

However, Herron sneaked through, picked up the pass, skirted the onrushing Tuinman and easily slipped the ball into the empty net.

Four minutes later Alston's 30-metre drive was tipped over the bar by Tuinman.

The last 10 minutes of the quickly dying match belonged to Alan Ainslie who gave a terrifying demonstration of his shooting power.

In the 80th minute, to start with, he smashed a drive home from about 25 metres, the ball wobbling in the air before digging itself into the corner.

One minute later another fantastic drive by Ainslie made Tuinman stretch and the ball was tipped to corner.

One more Ainslie cannonade towards the very finish — and that was the end.

The Saints won, easily, though without giving a truly impressive display.

George Harris was once again the pick of the defenders though Hamilton is also on the mend.

Utjesenovic has lost his sure touch while Williams is apt to have strange lapses.

Ainslie was their best midfielder with Alston the most enterprising striker.

Tuinman in goal was Prague's best man; he saved at least two or three tremendous drives and point-blank shots.

Kulak held the defence together well, but the full-backs were outsped and outclassed.

Reilly, Blacker and Armytage did the most to come to grips with St. George, the others were seldom seen to advantage.

Tony Boskovic was again his firm self, occasionally even overruling his erratic linesmen.

St. George: Fraser, Harris, Utjesenovic, Hamilton, Williams, Abonyi, Alston, Ainslie, Denton, Herron (Grosse 71 min.), Treasure (Hogg 28 min.).

Prague: Tuinman, Harcombe, Henderson, Kulak (McDonald 71 min.), Rootsey, Blacker, Armytage, Walsh, Weir, Reilly, Anasis (Madrussan half time).

Scorers: Herron 53 min.; Ainslie 80 min.

Referee: A. Boskovic.

Crowd: 6,233.

Wests, Marconi split third prize

Wests and Marconi shared $900 for drawing 1-1 in last Sunday's play-off for third Ampol Cup prize-money.

Although Western Suburbs had more scoring chances, especially in a first half they completely dominated, a draw was a fitting result for a dull match.

Of last Sunday's 70-minute match there is little to report except that Wim Spiekerman put Wests ahead in the fourth minute with an untypical right foot shot.

After Ray Richards almost on halftime had hit the bar from point-blank range, Marconi equalised 12 minutes into the second half.

Although Mihajlovic actually pushed the ball over the line, the goal was Richards' as the Marconi skipper cleverly deflected the ball to catch the entire Western Suburbs defence going the wrong way.

All that was left for Mihajlovic to do was to tap the ball past Ross Kelly.

Marconi: Rorke, Robertson, Wilson, Richards, Connolly, Mihajlovic, Burns, Campbell, Danajevits, Griffiths, Samuel.

Western Suburbs: Kelly, Van Blerk (Thompson 48 min.), Johnston, Guildea, Kinnell, Byles, Turner, Bijkerk (Blue 65 min.), Jack.

Scorers: Spiekerman 4 min., Mihailovic 47 min.

Referee: N. Campbell.

Crowd: 6,233 (double-header).

— MIKE RENWICK

ST. GEORGE WINS MARATHON SEMI

It took St. George-Budapest 170 heart-stopping minutes last week to finally eliminate Wests and qualify for the Ampol Cup final.

Wednesday week's semi-final replay at Marks Field ended in a 1-1 draw, but 48 hours later, at Garside Park, Saints ran out 3-2 winners in a thriller.

St. George were unlucky not to win the first replay as they had a perfectly good goal disallowed just on halftime, and were denied the winning goal literally at the final whistle of the second period of 10-minute extra-time when referee Peter Rampley blew to signal the end just as Alston was heading the ball into the net.

Last Friday week's match was the best so far this season: it had everything — goals, good football, excitement and suspense.

Either team could have won because Wests certainly had their chances, too, although on the whole Saints were the more dangerous and creative in attack.

Wednesday's details:

St. George: Fraser, Harris, Utjesenovic, Schaefer, Williams, Hogg, Hamilton, Abonyi, Herron (Ainslie), Alston, Denton.

Wests: Kelly, Van Blerk, Hargreaves, Johnston, Kinnell, Smith, Byles (Jack), Gray, Bijkerk, Turner, Spiekerman.

Scorers: Schaefer (own goal) 13 min., Denton 41 min.

Referee: P. Rampley.

Crowd: 1,525.

* * *

Friday's details:

Wests: Kelly, Van Blerk, Hargreaves, Johnston, Kinnell, Smith, Jack (Gray, Byles), Guildea, Bijkerk, Turner, Spiekerman.

St. George: Fraser, Harris, Utjesenovic, Treasure, Williams, Hamilton, Denton, Abonyi, Herron, Alston, Ainslie.

Scorers: Herron 25 & 40 mins., Ainslie 59 min.; Turner 18 & 49 mins.

Referee: P. Rampley.

Crowd: 2,200.

— LOU GAUTIER

Herron top goal scorer

St. George-Budapest's Irish striker, the vastly improved Jim Herron was the Ampol Cup's top scorer with seven goals to his credit.

Then came Alan Ainslie, Mike Denton (both St. George) and Gary Manuel (Pan Hellenic) with five goals each.

Manuel's feat is remarkable as he played in only four matches against nine by Herron and Denton.

Brian Turner (Wests) scored four goals, John Butler (Prague), Dave Rigby (SCU), Bill Rogers (Auburn), Agenor Muniz (Hakoah), Adrian Alston (St. George), Danny McKinnon (APIA) and Alan Griffiths (Marconi) three each.

Six players scored own goals: Marnoch and Walsh (Hakoah), Keith (APIA), Ashurst (Croatia), Selfridge (Auburn) and Schaefer (St. George).

This is a remarkably high "accident rate" when you consider that during the entire 1971 championship only eight own goals were scored.

Of the six Ampol Cup "offenders" Ashurst also scored for his team.

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READERS' LETTERS

CROWD QUERY

Would you please inform me as to what was the real attendance figure for the match between Slovan Bratislava and Cruzeiro of Brazil that was played in Sydney?

"Soccer World" and some daily papers gave the attendance figure as 27,000, but the Brisbane "Sunday Sun" wasn't so generous, and gave the attendance as 15,000.

The editor of the "Sun" informs me that the crowd estimate came from a Sydney representative, and it seems that he is satisfied with that.

ERIC HAMPSON,
Brisbane (Q).

● **No official attendance was released for the match. Veteran observers, who know the Showground inside out, estimated the crowd at between 25,000 and 29,000 spectators and soccer reporters covering the match settled on 27,000 as the crowd. When the gate-takings were checked, however, it was discovered that only 15,000 spectators had passed through the turnstiles. The promoters of the match were just as shocked as the Press as there can be no doubt that there were at least 27,000 people in the ground, the capacity of which is 35,000. — Editor.**

FOREIGN NAMES

The decision to restore the names of Yugal and Croatia to the Ryde and South Sydney teams is a retrograde step which must be viewed with alarm by soccer followers.

In yielding to the clamorous demands of minority groups the Federation has again displayed its lack of intestinal fortitude which is largely responsible for the many problems facing the code in this State.

How many "fair dinkum" Australians could follow teams with names such as Marconi, Yugal, Pan Hellenic, Hakoah and Prague?

Soccer followers have experienced a series of unpleasant incidents involving teams with national names, namely Yugal and Croatia. The pattern is repeated overseas (c.f. "World Soccer", November 1971).

The argument that national names attract crowds can best be countered by the observations that the "spectators" attracted are hardly the type one would invite into one's home.

I should also like to point out that the retention of national names is not likely to facilitate the assimilation of migrants, a goal which is surely bigger than soccer and one which deserves the support of all Australians — old and new.

R.I. POSITTI,
Corrimal.

—o—

● **We are still receiving too many unsigned letters. Under no circumstances will those be published. To be considered, letters must bear the writer's full name and address. Typed letters would also be preferred. — Editor.**

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SYDNEY SECOND DIVISION

Canterbury tipped to win promotion

— By CHARLES SPITERI —

The early kick-off of the championship has resulted in chaos as several grounds are still being used by cricket.

Two matches have had to be postponed in this weekend's opening round, hardly a good omen for the premiership ahead.

Manly v. Polonia and Melita Eagles v. Ku-ring-gai won't take place, and both will be played only on Saturday, May 27.

The early kick-off, however, seems to have pleased most clubs, who are keen to test themselves as soon as possible because no one really placed much faith in the spate of pre-championship trial matches.

Canterbury, who retained the majority of last year's players, should start hot favorites for promotion as none of the other clubs, so far, have made any bold moves to dramatically strengthen their playing staff.

Other clubs with promotion ambitions are Melita Eagles, Granville, Corinthians and Balgownie.

This quartet should provide cut-throat competition as there is little to choose between any of the four.

Bankstown District SC, under the experienced Roger Bamforth, who has returned to the fold as coach, could be a surprise-packet.

The merger out Bankstown way seems to have succeeded beyond all expectations and enthusiasm is at a new peak in this strong soccer area.

North Sydney-Inter, with Mike Mazzina back as coach, should do much better than last season and may also surprise in a relatively weak field.

Northern Districts, the former Hornsby-North End, bounces back in Second Division, and the coaching of Dave Zeman should enhance its chances of consolidation in this division.

With most of the clubs concentrating on youth, Second Division should see an array of new faces, all struggling to break into the big time.

Most of this talent will certainly appear initially in the reserve grade, but as the season progresses many youngsters may earn regular spots in first teams.

FORM GUIDE

The opening round clashes should provide some sort of a guide as two of the top teams and two of perhaps the lower teams meet each other.

Canterbury take on Corinthians at Arlington Oval on Sunday, and with the expected signing of goalkeeper Michael Mikolajczyk, may prove too strong for Corinthians.

But there could be surprises in the Corinthians team too, as the British Ex-Servicemen's Club has emphasised it wants to back a First, not a Second Division team.

The Northern Districts-North Sydney Inter Saturday game could go either way as both teams have a couple of ex-First Division players in their ranks.

Another thriller is the clash between old rivals Granville and Balgownie, which traditionally always produces a close game.

Balgownie, banking heavily on youth this year, have impressed in recent trials and Granville have to be at their best to keep both points at home.

The clash between Bankstown and Guildford could be close, but the home team should narrowly keep both points at the Soccer Centre.

● Lack of space prevented us this week from giving the usual line-ups, but these will be included next week, together with match descriptions and goal-scorers.

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Enmore confident of higher rating

— By KEITH GILMOUR —

Enmore club is depending upon Nick Tsingolis, their gain from Rosebery Rhodes, to push them further up the Third Division this year.

With Kostakis and Tzanatos in form, the club has shown up well in trials so far.

Enmore's first run resulted in a 4-2 win over Arncliffe Scots, followed by a 1-1 draw with St. George second grade.

Last week they lost 5-2 to a team drawn from Pan Hellenic firsts and reserves.

Enmore now has big club premises established at 159 Enmore Road, Enmore.

Working well

Arncliffe Scots are working well under new coach David Cliss.

Cliss is obliged to work the team two nights a week, but he has been training the side three nights, and the players are enjoying being worked to the maximum.

Arncliffe Scots' have lost three players, including centre-half Terry Walker, to Melbourne.

These spots will be hard to fill, but the big need is for a goalkeeper who can hold his place in the first team.

Rosebery improves

Rosebery, last year's premiers and champions in Inter-Suburban First Division, have not let the grass grow under their feet.

Their signings include Chilean inside-forward Michael Lago, a ball player in the Campana mould.

John Vlahos, a very successful centre-half, has been signed from Enmore.

George Dolimites, a defender from Alexander club in Melbourne, will be another sound acquisition.

Results so far include a 2-2 draw with Northern Districts, and a 2-1 win over a combined Canterbury first and reserve team last Saturday.

Canterbury played Ray Pocock and Bob Hardy.

South Sydney Council will decide on allocation of Erskineville Oval this week, and the club has high hopes of success.

Witcombe coach

Phil Witcombe, Wenty Waratah's former secretary, has been appointed club coach.

His duties include establishing a graded coaching system to cover all teams down to the smallest juniors.

Phil is applying himself with typical Welsh-Australian energy, and they say the players are eating plenty of mushrooms to keep up their strength . . .

Ken Wright is the new club secretary.

West Sutherland is hoping to have David Champion back to the club after a season with Banks City.

Next Sunday West Sutherland will be trialling against North Bankstown, now back to Inter-Suburban football, at the Hotham Road ground.

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COOK'S TOUR OF MELBOURNE

The opening round of the 1972 Victorian State League this weekend is split three ways. Fixtures are as follows:

Friday — Croatia v. George Cross; Saturday — Keilor Austria v. Wilhelmina, Alexander v. Juventus; Sunday — JUST v. SM Hellas, Hakoah v. Melbourne, Polonia v. Box Hill.

Cautious optimism precedes the 1972 State League kick-off this weekend. And no wonder.

For with attendances dropping alarmingly in the past few seasons, goals becoming scarcer and scarcer and the standard of the game leaving much to be desired it would need a super optimist to say that all is well.

It will take a big effort by club managements, coaches and above all the players to pull the game out of its present rut and pull back worthwhile crowds and inject some real finance into the game.

DECLINE

The drift in attendances has been caused in the main by the serious decline in the playing standards. And while the limitations of the players is well known, the majority are capable of turning in much better performances than they have done in the past two or three years.

Coaches, too, are not immune. Too many indulge in numerical formations and which they reel off like telephone numbers hoping for the best and, which in many cases, their sides are incapable of playing.

Club managements must demand and get a better all-round effort from their players, and at the same time ensure that their coaches don't bog their sides down with systems which baffle and bewilder the players as well as driving the fans away with boredom.

In many aspects, the game is suffering by having too many idealists and too few realists.

The game suffers heavily, too, from under exposure and with no real TV or radio coverage, many of the clubs completely ignore the restricted press facilities and never transmit any news of their players. On being questioned their usual reply is — "No comment".

I wish the State League luck. They will need it!

PROSPECTS

The prospects of the State League clubs as I see it:

JUST will again present a strong challenge for top honors. They have undoubted talent and experience in their ranks and invariably play a good brand of soccer although intermittent complacency and an over-casual approach when the chips are down can be their downfall.

SM-Hellas, runners-up last year, were the big disappointment of the Ampol Cup series. But although many are not prepared to rate their league chances highly on account of their poor showing I reckon they are capable of causing a stir, provided they stiffen their defence and play an attacking brand of soccer.

Croatia, third on the ladder last season and never lower than fourth in the past five years, are not only one of the best, but one of the most go-ahead combinations in business. Lost ace defender Brian Williams but have recruited four good class players from Yugoslavia and are in with an excellent title-winning chance.

Melbourne-HSC are definitely a "distance" team, and never let up for the whole 90 minutes of any match. But they lack some penetration and striking power. Lost Johnny Wallace who went to UK, but gained Ken McDonald, the former Raith Rovers and Croatia-Sydney defender.

Wilhelmina are always a solid side and one of the hardest to beat at home. Can usually strengthen their side with quick good class importations. This trait makes their chances difficult to assess. Could do well. On the other hand, could be mediocre.

George Cross, after two dreadful seasons in 1969 and 1970, came back with a bang in the last 14 games of 1971. Lost Joe Makin but bought Tom Clark, the ex-Cowdenbeath and SM-Hellas forward. Defence is not watertight by any means and attack has been off target in finishing.

Polonia have been together for several years and have almost wholly been recruited from their junior ranks. With only one newcomer, Peter Gray, from WA, and no departures, their best hope lies in improving their finishing position at the end of 1972.

Juventus took a mighty retreat from champions in 1970 to scramble into the eighth spot last year. Lost several players, including Salisbury and Sandison, but on the credit side have gained John Perin and Jim McRoberts, a Scottish winger. Inconsistency is still their biggest weakness.

Hakoah battle bravely on and are not unaware of their lack of talent and shortcomings. Can look really poor at times, yet when the chips are down they can rise to the occasion. Will have much the same line-up of players as in 1971.

Box Hill lack real class and once again it seems they will lean heavily on spirit and enthusiasm to get them safety points early in the season.

Alexander have tremendous drawing potential but they have never come to grips with the reality that the majority of players who represent them are just not good enough. It could be the same old story all over again this year.

Newly-promoted **Keilor-Austria** will find that the hard road of 22 matches in the State League is vastly different from the opposition they played in Metro-soccer last season. Still, I wish them good luck.

— JIM COOK

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